By the Way of the Valley.

BY JENNIE CHAPPELL, AUTHOR OF "FOR HONOUR'S SAKE," "WILD BRYONIE," ETC.

CHAPTER VII.

STRUGGLES, AND A NEW FRIEND.

E sure you send to us if ever you want anything," said Nellie Chesney, on parting from the little widow; "or if ever you get tired of work and want a rest. Always remember, dearie, that there are hearts, your own kindred, who care for you and Baby, and that we shall always be glad to do anything for you."

"Thank you, dear," said Jasmine, with a gentle gratitude in her voice that was new to her, yet with a brevity that seemed to infer no probable acceptance of her relatives' proffered kindness.

"And you won't forget, will you, Jasmine," continued Nellie, caressing, involuntarily, the girl's bright fair head, "that there is another Friend who loves you even more than we do, who loves us all, although"—and her voice shook a little—"some of His ways are very hard for us to understand? He is always near, and always ready to hear and help. Oh, He has helped Mother so at this sad time, and me; no one outside could believe how much. Make Him — John's God — your Friend, dear, and all, some day, will be well."

For answer, Jasmine kissed her baby, but said not a word.

She felt Nellie's departure far more than she had that of her husband. She cried when she thought, not of her kindly, womanly presence, but of her eyes and her mouth, which were so like John's; and she cried the more when she looked at his baby. Many an hour in the darkness she lay awake, and wept because she had not loved him better, until the memory of the man lived and glowed in the heart which to his bodily presence had been almost cold. It was the old, sad story of love awakened all too late. Years afterwards somebody found, tied up with the few of John's letters which Jasmine had at the time of their receipt thought worth preserving, this bygone moan of a breaking heart, but with the word "husband" everywhere substituted for "Douglas"—the verses were copied in Jasmine's handwriting—

"Could ye come back to me, Douglas, Douglas,
In the old likeness that I knew,
I would be so faithful, so loving, Douglas—
Douglas, Douglas, tender and true!

"Never a scornful word should grieve ye,
I'd smile on ye sweet, as the angels do—
Sweet as your smile on me shone ever,
Douglas, Douglas, tender and true!

"Oh, to call back the days that are not!
My eyes were blinded your words were few,
Do you know the truth now, up in heaven,
Douglas, Douglas, tender and true?

"Stretch out your hand to me, Douglas, Douglas,
Drop forgiveness from heaven like dew,
As I lay my heart on your dead heart, Douglas,
Douglas, Douglas, tender and true!"

Jasmine had imagined that embroidering in silks would be a pretty, delicate, almost idyllic mode of earning a livelihood, wherein she could sit, rocking Baby gently with her foot, and dreaming tender dreams of the past, while her fingers wove in the lovely flowers which should by-and-by bring welcome fruitage of silver, if not gold, for Baby and herself. But, alas, for the disenchantment that follows experience!

She soon discovered that so small was the remuneration, that her leisurely, lady-like way of working would scarcely suffice to bring in daily pence, not to think of richer coins. And Baby did not seem inclined to fall into the foot-rocking plan at all; she was a fragile, nervous little creature, with big, bright eyes that never seemed to shut, and she expressed her strong objection to the cradle, and her decided preference for mother's arms, in no uncertain tones. Jasmine could not sit and work while Baby lay and screamed, and her weekly earnings for the first month or so of the embroidery experiment averaged three-and-sixpence!

"Baby would lie quiet while Jasmine read." *p.* 50.

But her pride would not allow her to disclose these discouragements to the Chesneys, and she struggled on.

Mrs. Wright helped her as much as she could with the baby for a while, but by-and-by she let her apartments—Jasmine having relinquished all but two, which presently dwindled to one—and her time was then too much occupied to admit of her undertaking any extra work. Soon after, Baby fell ill, and needed tending almost every minute of the day. When she grew better, and Jasmine had a little more leisure again, the embroidery "season" was over, and there would be no more work for her for two or three months. Things began to look very dark to the lonely girl-mother, but as yet she had a little money in hand, and her lodging was secure, as Mrs. Wright accepted the use of Jasmine's furniture in the rooms which the latter had vacated in lieu of rent. Still, it behoved her to do something to earn money, and with as little delay as possible. What should it be?

It was an anxious day for Jasmine when she changed her last sovereign. She had been to the doctor with Baby, who did not thrive as she ought; and he had ordered an expensive peptonised food as absolutely necessary to the little creature's well-being. Of course, there was always the help or hospitality of her relatives at Hardwareham to fall back upon as a last resource, but Jasmine had made up her mind that it should be quite the last. To appeal to them would be scarcely less repugnant to her proud nature than to allow herself to accept assistance from good Mrs. Wright, though both alternatives still lay between her and absolute destitution. So, in the few brief letters which she had sent to the Chesneys, she had hitherto reported herself as "getting on very well," which rather equivocal statement was accepted so confidingly by mother and daughter that they did not conceal from Jasmine's knowledge the fact that things were not going on so very well at Hardwareham, for Joyce had been compelled through ill-health to resign his post, and Mrs. Chesney had been most unfortunate in the selection of a man to fill his place. After that, nothing short of impending starvation would have induced Jasmine to throw herself upon their slender means for support.

As she sat rocking the baby, and vaguely wondering whether it would be better to offer her work to the Gentlewomen's Aid Society, or to dispose of some one or other of her father's curios, and so wait for the embroidery season to come again, her meditations were broken in upon by the feeble cry from an upper room of "Nurse, nurse! I want you, nurse!"

The drawing-room floor and an extra bedroom had been engaged by a lady, with her invalid nephew, a cripple boy of eleven or twelve years old, and his nurse. Mrs. Alder was the wife of a wealthy Surrey gentleman, and was staying in London on account of the child Noel's health, he being left in her charge by his father, who was abroad. She had selected this comparatively humble lodging in Stanley Square because of its vicinity to the residence of the specialist, by whom it was necessary for Noel, two or three times a week, to be seen.

But Mrs. Alder also made this sojourn in town an opportunity for visiting all her friends, and being a London woman, these were many. She moreover, with them, was making a round of all the picture galleries, exhibitions, and popular sights, leaving little Noel almost entirely to the care of his nurse, Banks, who, in her turn, preferred gossiping with Mrs. Wright or her servant, to tending or amusing her young charge. Jasmine had often thought that the little invalid, if not positively neglected, had a much duller time of it than he need.

So, when the cry of "Nurse!" was again repeated in a tremulous voice that seemed on the verge of tears, she hastily laid down her baby—who, for a wonder, did not wake—and slipped up the stairs to the little invalid's room.

A pair of lovely dark eyes in a small, pale face brightened at her entrance, and then widened in mute surprise.

"I thought it was nurse," the child said.

"Can't I do anything for you, dear?" asked Jasmine. "What do you want? I don't think nurse can hear."

"I've dropped two of my marbles," replied the boy, who had a Solitaire-board before him on a bed-table; "and I can't reach any of my books, and I'm so tired."

Jasmine, always gentle towards children, had lately grown tenderer than ever, and those pitiful dark eyes went straight to her heart.

"Shall I read you something, dear? or tell you a story?" she asked, sitting down beside Noel's couch, but with one ear listening for the first cry of her own baby.

"Oh, do, please! You *are* kind!" exclaimed the boy, radiant with pleasure. "Would you mind reading me a bit of 'The Lady of the Lake,' or don't you care for poetry?"

"I like it better than anything," Jasmine said. And for the next half-hour she and Noel wandered together amid "mountains that like giants stand to sentinel the enchanted land" of fair Ellen and brave Malcolm Graeme.

Nurse returned, and was beyond measure surprised to hear that Master Noel had been calling for her; she thought, to be sure, she had left him all right "for two minutes," she said. And she wondered whatever there could be in "that ringling, jingling verse book" to flush his cheek and make his eyes so eager and bright.

"Oh, do come again, do, please!" the child begged, when, summoned by Queen Baby below, Jasmine was forced to leave him. "You and the poetry do go so well together"—a boyish way of expressing his appreciation of the fact that Jasmine was beautiful both to look at and to listen to, as beautiful as the cadences she so sympathetically read.

And she did go again, many a time, taking Baby with her, who, strange to say, seemed soothed by her mother's murmurous voice, and would lie, open-eyed and quiet, while Jasmine read. And the acquaintance thus begun grew, notwithstanding the dissimilarity of age and circumstance, into a companionship of almost mutual comfort.

CHAPTER VIII.

HER FIRST PRAYER.

IN the languid autumn days, Jasmine's "Dollie," as she had fallen into the way of calling the wee Martha Dolores, sadly pined again. Her wide-open, dark blue eyes seemed too large and bright for the tiny white face, and her little limbs, though beautifully moulded, were far too slender for her age. The fact was, Jasmine, loving and devoted young mother though she was, had even less idea than most early-wedded girls of how to wisely care for the precious little treasure entrusted to her; and to motherly Mrs. Wright, who watched the pair with anxious eyes, but had almost ceased to proffer the advice which was rarely followed, it seemed almost as though yet another baby life was to be added to the great army of the martyred first-born, which are constantly being sacrificed that their parents may thus sorrowfully buy experience for the treatment of those that shall follow.

The common rock of giving Baby "just a taste" of everything she ate herself, was that on which Dollie's health seemed likely to be wrecked. In spite of remonstrance, Jasmine would do it; "such a crumb," she said, "surely could not do any harm." Thus many things were introduced into the poor little stomach which it could not possibly digest, and fretfulness and sickness were the result.

"I'm afraid she'll lose the poor mite, I really am!" Mrs. Wright often confided to nurse Banks. "But I daren't say a word. It's 'Thank you, Mrs. Wright, but I think I ought to know what to do for my own child!' Poor, foolish girl! Yes, she 'ought to,' and so ought a good many more before ever they take upon themselves to bring helpless babies into the world, but they don't, and many a little coffin is filled, and many a bitter tear is shed because of it. If anything does happen to the pretty lamb I shall be grieved to my very heart, for she's a fond little mother, and would give her very life for the baby if she knew how."

A wet autumn evening was early closing in to a drizzling twilight, as Jasmine paced up and down her room with the fretful babe in her arms. As long as she kept in motion, Dollie was quiet; the moment she paused, an irritable wail of remonstrance started her off again. She was herself feeling very lonely and very melancholy. The embroidery season had recommenced, but business, in consequence of numerous important financial disasters, was so bad that only a few of the best and oldest "hands" were being retained; there was nothing for her to do. And even if there had been, Dollie's demands upon her attention were so unceasing, that to have done a couple of hours' work in the day would have been well-nigh impossible. Several of her father's most valued articles of *vertù* had already, with Mrs. Wright's assistance, been temporarily entrusted to the care of a neighbouring curiosity dealer, in return for small —very small—sums of cash (Jasmine had no idea that they had actually been *pawned!*), and it seemed as though the remainder must soon follow, with faint prospect of ever obtaining any of them back. The news from Hardwareham was anything but encouraging. Mrs. Chesney, senior, was experiencing so much trouble with the shop, that she contemplated disposing of the business and investing the price in something else. "The future looks very dim to us," Nellie wrote. "But of one thing I am sure, God will never desert my mother in her hoar hairs."

"Dim"! It looked more than dim to Jasmine. She seemed to be going forward into a cold, impenetrable fog. *She* was sure of nothing. God might desert her; why should He not? She had never done anything to secure His friendship. He had snatched from her her father and her husband, and left her alone among strangers—no doubt as a punishment for her long indifference to Him. Possibly He would take vengeance on her yet more. Her heart was growing hard, and almost defiant at the thought, when Dollie's velvet fingers came softly as a kiss against her cheek, and her whole soul melted into tenderness beneath their touch.

The tiny one, John's baby, what evil had it done? So small, so frail, so helpless! Surely it could not please the Almighty to make an innocent creature suffer. And already there had been forced upon Jasmine's imagination the possibility of a time coming when she might not have money even to buy Baby's food. It was a terrible thought. Even now the constant visits to the doctor and the costly nourishment he recommended were becoming a serious drain upon her slender hoard. What should she do when at length it was all gone?

"'Oh, God, be kind to Baby.'"

Pressing her trembling lips upon the warm, silken ball that snuggled against her breast, Jasmine almost involuntarily breathed her first prayer: "Oh, God, be kind to Baby. Pity her helplessness. Remember her father—oh, John *was* good!—don't desert her! Be kind to my poor little Baby, oh, God!"

Somehow, after that she felt as though the ground were firmer under foot. For was not her own fate bound up with her child's?

There was a tap at the door. Opening it, Jasmine was surprised to see Mrs. Alder. She asked the latter to walk in and take a chair.

"You have been sitting with my little nephew this afternoon, I hear, Mrs.—er—Chesney," the visitor commenced, with rather awkward abruptness. "He seems to have taken a very great fancy to you."

"He is a dear child," answered Jasmine. "I am getting quite fond of him. It is sad that he should be such an invalid."

"He is better, much better, than he was. Dr. Jackson thinks that a few months at Hastings will now work a most beneficial change. Noel is going there almost directly, and we want him to stay the winter."

"He told me he was going away," said Jasmine. "I shall quite miss him."

"Well—er—that is just what I was thinking," resumed Mrs. Alder, with some hesitation. "Banks is leaving us—not a satisfactory person, not at all!—and Noel really does not want sick-nursing now. I should be so glad to meet with a nice, refined young person to go with him to the seaside, as a sort of companion-attendant, you know!"

She paused, and Jasmine, looking rather blank, merely said, "Yes, I see."

"Noel has taken such a very great fancy to you, that it occurred to me that possibly you—being, as I understand, not altogether in independent circumstances——"

She paused again.

"But Baby?" questioned Jasmine.

"Oh, surely you could leave her in charge of some trustworthy person, just for two or three months?"

"Oh, no," answered Jasmine, "I could not do that."

"Then, of course, there is no need for further discussion," said Mrs. Alder, rising. "I'm sure I understood that you would be glad to hear of any opportunity of obtaining suitable employment. I hope, for your sake, that I was misinformed. But poor Noel will be sadly disappointed."

"If you will allow me time to think it over," said Jasmine, beginning to fear that her hasty refusal might have been unwise, "and give you an answer later on?"

"Oh, certainly," was the gracious response. "Think it over by all means, and, if I might offer a suggestion, I should say, talk it over with your good friend Mrs. Wright, and let me know to-morrow."

So saying, Mrs. Alder took her departure, and although Jasmine rather resented that allusion to the lodging-house keeper as on terms of intimacy and equality with herself, she was wise enough to by-and-by take the latter into her confidence.

"Well, my dear, perhaps it seems hard to say so," was Mrs. Wright's advice, "but I don't think this is a chance to be lost. Mrs. Alder is a liberal-minded lady, and the little boy and all being so fond of you, it might be the making of life-long friends for you, as one may say."

"But there's Baby," said Jasmine. "You forget her."

"No, my dear, I don't—bless her pretty heart. But I don't mind telling you that Mrs. Alder spoke to me about it before coming to you, and I've been making so bold as to think it over a bit myself. You know my daughter, Mrs. Spence?"

"Oh, yes. She often comes to see you."

"And you've seen that little boy who comes with her?"

"Oh, yes. A chubby little fellow, five or six years old."

"Yes. Well, that isn't her child, though she's as fond of him as if he was, never having had any of her own. He's a nurse-child, and she has brought him up since he was three months old, and as puny a little scrap of a thing as ever you saw. She was saying only the other day how she wished she could have the charge of another baby in the same way; she is so fond of babies! Now, couldn't you trust your Dollie, just for two or three months, to her? She would do by her as well as ever you would yourself, I guarantee that."

Mrs. Wright might have added, "And a good deal better," but she wisely refrained.

Jasmine looked down at her sleeping treasure, and the remembrance of her prayer flashed into her mind. With a startled, awesome feeling as of one hearing an inward cry, answered by a supernatural voice, she thought, "Is this God's doing? Can this be the way He is going to take care of her, and of us both?"

Jasmine was naturally of a confiding nature, and she believed that it was so. This, so to speak, was the first spiritual transaction of her life, and it decided her future course. If the Almighty One had thus condescended to hear her feeble prayer, surely He must be obeyed!

"There is only one thing I should wish to mention," said Mrs. Alder, when every other point had been settled. "There is a little difficulty about your name being *Chesney*. We have friends of that name, and it might prove rather awkward. What is your Christian name?"

"Jasmine."

"Oh, dear, how very peculiar!" cried Mrs. Alder, rather impatiently. "I had been hoping it was Susan or Jane. Should you object to being called Jane—or Banks? We are accustomed to the name of Banks."

"I should decidedly object to being called anything that was not my name," returned Jasmine, struggling with her indignation. "But," she added, for if the thing had to be done it must, "you may call me Mrs. John, if you like, for that was my husband's name."

And thus it was arranged.

(To be continued.)

FEATHERED WOMEN.

AN eloquent letter in the London *Times* from Mr. W. H. Hudson, the well-known naturalist, under the above heading, on the revived fashion of using feathers in millinery, will, it is hoped, stir the public mind to some purpose. In a little pamphlet which Mr. Hudson has written on this subject for the Society for the Protection of Birds he describes the methods by which the "aigrettes," or "ospreys" as they are called in the trade, are obtained.

The egret, which at other times is a solitary bird, is gregarious at breeding-time. Then the egrets congregate, as herons do in heronries, to the number of three or four hundred. The hunter chooses his time when the young birds are fully fledged, but not yet able to fly, because then the parent birds will not go far from the nests. "I have seen," says Mr. Hudson, "how they act when the heronry is approached by a man; they take wing and hover in a cloud over his head, their boldness, broad wings, and slow flight making it as easy as possible to shoot them down. And, when the killing is finished, and the few handfuls of coveted feathers have been plucked out, the slaughtered birds are left in a white heap to fester in the sun and wind, in sight of their orphaned young, that cry for food and are not fed."

In conclusion he says:—"We all, men and women, whether abreast or men first and women far behind, are continually advancing. It therefore becomes only reasonable to believe that the time will come when the destructive madness of the present day will be impossible, when a woman will be as much above wearing 'murderous millinery' as she is now, in Europe, above wearing the savage ornaments with which the naked red woman of Venezuela decorates herself, or the necklace of human ears (captured from the enemy) which a Mexican lady is said to have exhibited in a ball-room.

"But what an impoverished nature and earth future generations will inherit from us! God's footstool, yes, but with all the shining golden threads picked out of its embroidery. Some knowledge will survive among our descendants of the wonderful and brilliant forms of bird life that are now passing away—the unimaginable beauty and grace that they would have known how to appreciate; and with it some knowledge of how it was destroyed in the space of two or three decades for the gratification of a detestable vanity. They will, I fancy, think less kindly of their cultured, Ruskin-reading nineteenth-century ancestors than of those very much more distant progenitors who had some shocking customs, but spoilt nothing, and who, at all events, did not sin against the light."

OUR HOME LAUNDRY.

BY AN AMATEUR LAUNDRESS.

II.—Clear-starching and Ironing.

A Breezy Morning.

In my last paper I told how we manage Jaegars, flannels, and woollies in our Home Laundry. For a long time that is all we girls attempted. But, one spring day, scarlet fever broke out in Mrs. Smith's cottage, and she was the only good laundress for many miles round.

So, Vera and Helen and Annie and I boldly resolved to grapple with the mysteries of clear-starching and ironing. Collars, silk, and lace were our chief difficulties, and, as this paper must not be a long one, I shall give recipes and rules only for these.

Vera and Annie are the happy possessors of two white silk blouses. They wore them carefully, but at last were obliged to consign them to the tub.

We then proceeded in the following way: A gallon of soft water was boiled, and in it one tablespoonful of borax dissolved. This was the bleaching mixture, and prevents the silk getting yellow. After being left for a few hours, steeping, we squeezed our things out, and washed them in a moderately warm, soapy lather. If too hot, we found the colour of the silk was spoiled. The blouses were pure white. So we rinsed them in slightly blued water, and to the last basinful we added a teaspoonful of prepared gum.

In order to make this, buy one ounce of gum arabic, and dissolve in a jar, by pouring over it half a pint of boiling water. Then strain the solution and bottle it.

This mixture we always use for stiffening laces, the boys' ties, and a little, too, for giving silk a gloss and making it look like new. Our next move was to wrap the blouses in a soft cloth, pass them through the mangle, and leave them thus rolled up until we were ready to iron. This we did on the *right* side, first covering with a thin smooth cloth. Huckaback will leave marks on the shiny surface. When partly dry, we took away the covering and ironed completely.

Annie was anxious to put the iron at once on the silk, but Helen proved the necessity of an intervening covering, by showing how the damp silk contracted a rusty stain when brought into direct contact with our heaters.

This was our usual formula for all silk things, white or

Getting Ready for the Wash.

cream, such as the said blouses, handkerchiefs, etc. We often wonder at the length of time our neckties last white, and we very seldom have to replace them.

Father is a clergyman, and his stocks have always been a difficulty. In despair, some time ago he took to those horrid celluloid things that "shine and look slammy," as brother Bob says. Now, since our Home Laundry was started, he rejoices daily in a clean, stiff "white-washed fence," and we all can wear unlimited collars and cuffs.

One tablespoonful of white starch, one teacupful of cold water, and a small teaspoonful of borax—that is our recipe for cold water, unboiled starch, and it is surprising how far it goes. The above quantity is sufficient for four collars and two pairs of cuffs.

Mix the starch with a little of the water, being very careful to leave no lumps or grits; add the rest of the water, and the borax (previously dissolved in a little boiling water). Now put in your collars and cuffs, which, of course, have been first washed, blued, and perfectly dried, otherwise they will not absorb sufficient stiffening.

Rub very carefully—almost as if you were washing in the starch—and soap the collars, etc., on *both* sides. Then lay on a clean cloth, and rub in the mixture; wring, roll up tightly in another clean cloth, pat and press with both hands, and leave for a couple of hours. Now take your collars, and rub with dry linen on both sides, to flatten wrinkles and keep the shape.

Your irons in the meanwhile have been getting very hot. Rub them clean and bright on some scraped bath brick, and use them on the *wrong* side of your articles first.

We found a good deal of pressure was wanted, always pointing towards the edge, especially after the collars had been turned to the right side.

How often we nearly gave up in despair at the innumerable creases and air bubbles that would spoil the look of father's stocks! At last we learned that these came from the starch having been unevenly rubbed into them and *not* from the pressing. We always finished up with a touch of a polisher, on the right side of the collar laid on the bare table. Father does not like a *gloss* on his stocks. But the cuffs of his shirts we made as shiny as possible, by rubbing with warm water after flat pressing, and *before* carefully using the polishing iron.

I think everybody has a pet way of washing lace—just as everybody has a recipe for curries, and a way of "fixing" flannels. One gentleman has assured me that boiling water poured straight out of a kettle spout on to hand-knit socks and all kinds of woollies prevents them shrinking, and keeps them soft. I have never tried *his* way. We prefer our own, as given in a previous paper. So now I can only tell how we manage laces in our Home Laundry.

We have some very valuable Limerick flounces, a scarf of handsome Maltese, and various ruffles of Carrickmacross and old rose point. Our *tools* are—an old bottle and a new toothbrush. Very carefully we roll our yards of filmy lace round the bottle, letting one embroidered edge just underlap the other. Then we sew it at the end.

In a basin we have a lather of warm water and melted soap, in which, very carefully, inch by inch we brush over our lace with the soft toothbrush. Every soiled spot receives special attention from those little bristles. Then we unroll, and knead well in the water, never allowing a rub of any sort to be used on the delicate surface. Rinsing and blueing follow. Then the wet things are put through gum-water (recipe as above) and *dried*, otherwise they will stick to the iron and cause much trouble.

Before ironing, the lace must be gently pulled into shape, and sprinkled with *hot* water. (N.B.—The white spots so often noticed on net and muslin, etc., are caused by using cold water for this.) Roll up lightly in a towel—not huckaback—and leave till evenly damp.

Begin ironing at the edge always, and on the wrong side. If the lace has a very raised surface, iron on several thicknesses of blanket. Then ruffles and tuckers will never be tacked into your gown wrong side out.

One day I wanted a Limerick lace collar in a great hurry. Helen offered to make it up for me. Unfortunately, the gum mixture bottle was empty, and she used, to stiffen it, a lump of sugar dissolved in a breakfastcup full of boiling water. Her iron was hot, as usual, and, alas! as it came in contact with the thus stiffened fabric, it left a big brown stain. The sugar had burnt and discoloured.

On an emergency, with a *warm* iron, such a stiffening may answer very well; but we have found it better to do things in a right way, or—not at all. I think this has been the secret of our success in Our Home Laundry.

TWO LITTLE HANDS.

ONCE on a summer day divine,
Two little hands fell into mine.
How pink they were! how frail and fine!
Each one a crumpled velvet ball,
So soft and so absurdly small,
Ah, me! to hold within them all
Life's tangled and mysterious skein—
The mingled threads of joy and pain,
Whose hidden ends we seek in vain!

Oh! fast the years have fled away;
Two little hands, at work or play,
Still bide with me the livelong day;
Now on some wilful mischief bent,
And now to loving service lent;
Now folded—sleepy and content—
The dimpled fingers curled, like those
Sweet jealous leaves that cling and close
About the red heart of a rose.

I kiss them with a passionate sigh;
The quick fears spring, I scarce know why,
In thinking of the by-and-by!
How will they build, these little hands?
Upon the treacherous shifting sands?
Or where the Rock Eternal stands?
And will they fashion, strong and true,
The work that they shall find to do?
Dear little hands, if I but knew!

Could I but see the veilèd fate
Behind your barred and hidden gate!
Yet, trusting still, my love must wait!
Oh! when perplexed no more by these
Tear-blinded ways, my wanderings cease
In the sweet valleys of God's peace,
Beyond the dark some heavenly sign,
Some clue, however faint and fine,
Shall guide these little hands to mine!

PRACTICAL PAPERS ON EVERYDAY NURSING.

BY E. M. WATERWORTH, AUTHOR OF "MOTHERS AT HOME," "ABOUT OUR FOOD," ETC.

IV.—The Patient Again.

UR patient is now comfortably settled. You have made all the observations necessary, he has had his medicine and his nourishment, and has fallen asleep, and your work is over for the time being, you think. Not a bit of it. If you are interested in the case, you can learn a great deal of a patient's state while he is asleep, just as wise mothers will have a look even at their healthy children occasionally, to see how they behave when they are sleeping. So make a point of being near your patient sometimes while he sleeps.

In the sick-room, of course, when the disease is dangerous and the fight for life is hard, night and day are alike—food and medicine must be given at stated intervals; and, oh! what a relief it is to the anxious, loving nurse when she reads "Three times a day" on the medicine bottles, instead of "Every four hours."

Sleep.—"Should a patient, then, be roused for food and medicine?" That is a difficult question to answer, and one which depends very much on the condition of each individual patient. Speaking generally, a patient is doing well if he sleeps, and should not be roused unless the doctor orders it. But when there is much exhaustion after fever, or in other great weakness, your patient may sleep himself into another world if you do not rouse him to take nourishment. This should be done carefully and so quietly that you hardly disturb him, and it is wonderful what a matter of habit the taking of nourishment becomes.

In less severe cases let the patient sleep as much as he will, seeing that he has nourishment the last thing. Look at him from time to time with a carefully-shaded light, and if colour or breathing should change, rouse him and give food and stimulant.

Early Morning.—The early hours of the morning are most trying to the sick, and vitality is at its lowest point. Supposing, then, that you have been able to rest during the former part of the night, you, as the responsible person, should always be at your post, for a time at all events, about three or four o'clock. See that the patient's feet and legs are warm, and apply hot-water bottles and give hot drinks if there is any tendency to cold and shivering.

Even in mild attacks of illness something in the shape of food should always be given about this time, taking care that the patient rinses his mouth first if he wishes it. A cup of warm milk, or beef-tea, or gruel will prevent the unpleasant sinking feeling which assails the invalid in the early morning, and he will probably drop into a quiet sleep again.

So much for food at night, now for the use of sleep from the nurse's point of view.

Position of Patient.—In cases where the lungs are involved, you can tell which side is affected, or, at least, which is the worse, as the patient will naturally lie on the bad side, because he is more comfortable through the sounder lung having full play. That reminds me of another thing. Never let children or patients sleep with their heads under the bed-clothes. Consumptive people are much given to this. Without perhaps knowing why themselves, they find that they cough less in that position. The reason is that the air is warmed before it reaches the lungs; but to sleep like this is really slow poisoning, for they are breathing over and over again the same air laden with disease.

If the cough is violent, a silk handkerchief laid over the mouth, or the steam from a kettle placed close to the bedside, will sometimes give relief.

In fevers and other depressing illnesses, the patient generally sinks off the pillow and lies flat. This is the natural position, so let him keep it, and do not urge him to sit up, either for feeding or washing.

In diseases of the heart, on the other hand, the invalid is more comfortable propped up high in the bed, or leaning a little forward. Once more, let him be as he likes. He can't tell you why, but Nature is the sure guide; let him follow her.

In pneumonia, the most comfort can be found when lying on the back, because the basis of the lungs is the part affected.

In all abdominal mischief, such as peritonitis, etc., the patient lies with greatest ease on his back, with the legs drawn up, this relieving the strain on the lower part of the body.

So much for the language of sleep. It is full of meaning, and, as I said before, careful note should be kept in critical cases as to whether the patient slept quietly and soundly, or whether he gave frequent starts and woke unrefreshed, as well as the position he assumed when sleeping.

Next, as to the administration of food and medicine. Make a note of one maxim: Whatever you may be doing, never make two movements when one would do. Don't be fussy in your actions or in your words, and don't be nervous —if you can help it. If you can't help it, then try to put a bold face on it, and don't let your patient see that you are nervous. Take everything as a matter of course, from the brushing of hair to the dressing a wound, and you will find your patient will gain heart and courage, and begin to think he isn't so bad as he fancied, after all.

Food.—In giving food, if the patient cannot feed himself, place a clean dinner napkin under his chin, and see that there is another one near his hand for him to use himself, if he wishes. Feed him carefully and slowly, talking cheerfully meanwhile, and remove all signs of the food as soon as he has had what is necessary. If he persistently turns against what the doctor has ordered, tell the doctor, and see if something else cannot be tried instead. There is but small comfort in being told such and such a thing is good for you, if you swallow each mouthful with effort. Half the quantity of something you liked would do you more good.

If the patient can sit up in bed and feed himself, see that all is nicely arranged on a tray, taking off all unnecessary weight, for it is wonderful how heavy a small thing seems in the first days of convalescence. Don't slop the tea into the saucer, or, if you do, turn it out before you take it to the bedside. The niceties of life are too often forgotten by the most kind-hearted nurse, and she will take to the bedside what she would not dream of putting on the dining-room table.

Medicine.—Be careful in administering medicine. Be exact in your time and quantity. Read the label on the bottle before you pour out a dose—never mind if you do know it by heart; and if you measure from a marked bottle, stand the bottle down on a flat surface to see if you have the exact dose—don't hold it in your hand.

Many patients like to rinse their mouths after medicine; it seems faddy, perhaps, but if your patient likes it let him do it. It is merely a trifle, and it preserves the teeth and gives him a certain melancholy sort of pleasure. There's little enough of that commodity to be got in the sick-room; by all means store up all you can. Only be firm—as many little harmless indulgences as you like, but no shirking of the duties committed to your charge, and let your patient understand this once for all. You and he will get your reward by-and-by, when he approaches to convalescence.

CONVALESCENCE.—I know of no experience in life when there is more need to remember the old proverb, "Don't halloo till you are out of the wood," than when a patient has turned the corner after a dangerous illness; so remember that the good nurse does not relax her care when her charge is declared to be on the convalescent list—rather need she double it.

See that the patient is clad in warm and comfortable clothing. Keep his feet warm and his head cool, and to do this you must look out for draughts and beware of visitors. Many a promising case has been sent back to bed again from over-excitement caused by the well-meant gossip of friends.

If your patient seems over-tired, does not sleep well, and does not care for his food, you must close the door to visitors for a few days longer. In any case, never admit more than one at a time.

The desire for company, like the desire for food, in a convalescent must be gratified with discretion. Stomach and mind are alike, weak; take care that you do not let him overtax either.

The safest way of getting a patient up for the first time is to lay a blanket in a comfortable chair, and draw it carefully round him, putting a stool for his feet.

Special care must be taken to guard against chills after scarlet fever. The skin being in a peculiar condition, congestion is thrown inwardly, and generally affects the kidneys.

DEATH.—But we all know that convalescence is not the end of all illnesses, and the sick-room may be but the antechamber of death. What then are the nurse's duties?

First you must close the eyes, and, wrapping two silver coins in paper, lay them gently on the lids for a few hours.

Tie up the chin with a clean white handkerchief, to prevent its dropping; then proceed to wash the body tenderly and reverently. Put on a clean nightgown, tie a soft silk handkerchief round the head to look like a cap, and hide the one round the chin as much as possible, and lay the head on a very low pillow. Put the limbs straight, tying the feet together just under the toes, fold the arms on the breast, or lay them by the sides as you wish, then cover the whole body with a clean sheet. Tidy up the room, removing all signs of the late illness, open the window at the top, and lock the door.

Your work is over. If the patient was some dear one, whose life was linked with yours, you will feel comfort, even in your grief, that your hands did everything for him from first to last, and you will thank God that He gave you strength to do it. If the patient was in no way connected with you, you will yet be thankful that you have been able, in however slight a way, to ease his burden, and to do your duty faithfully and thoroughly.

GETTING THE WORTH OF ONE'S MONEY.

BY HELEN E. SMITH.

AN old lady of splendid personal appearance, and noted for her large charities, though having a comparatively small income, was rather taken to task as one who must cause her family to suffer at some unseen point in order to support at the same time her dress and liberality.

"My dear," said she to the would-be reprover, "I spend no more on dress than the majority of people of my own station in life; and my husband and family—seven persons in all—are as well dressed as myself. We are all in perfect health, which proves that our food is good and sufficient. My children have all received excellent educations. You can see that our house is neat, comfortable, and homelike from top to bottom; and I can assure you that, while my husband's income is not large, we do not filch from creditors to give charity. It is all just a matter of industry and ideas."

"Well, then," said her interlocutor, "I wish you would tell me how you do it, for I can't see."

The old lady replied, "The best I can do is to give a few general rules:—

"Count the cost of everything before you begin.

"Don't buy the first article you see, whether or not it is the one you want, but wait till you find the right thing. Contrariwise, never spend three shillings worth of time, strength, and 'bus fares rushing about to buy a shilling article for ninepence.

"Be very careful about buying alleged bargains. If one comes in your way, and you need the article, and know just the real value, take it, but never look for bargains, and rarely be induced to buy anything so offered.

"Have your gowns as fashionably and well made as you can afford, but never buy any material, colour, or trimming only because it is 'the rage' to-day.

"Don't take a yard of cloth to cut a watch-pocket, when there are plenty of bits that will answer the purpose.

"Don't dress up your house with crazy-work quilts, knitted rugs, and elaborate embroideries. None but the very rich and the very idle can afford to waste time in making such things. Also, don't waste money on upholstery of cheap cretonnes and muslins. They are pretty when new, but become shabby very quickly, while good articles of furniture substantially upholstered will last for a lifetime, and can be bought one or two at a time as can be afforded.

"Don't buy a four-pound steak for dinner if two pounds are enough. Don't let good bread get dry and good milk get sour while your family are eating other and more expensive food, which need not have been bought if the bread and milk had been eaten when good.

"Always do your own marketing; then you can judge for yourself what is best and most plentiful each day. Don't think that because a brace of partridges cost half-a-crown, and ten pounds of roast beef cost four times as much, that the former is cheaper. That only is cheapest which contains the most nutriment for the money. A quart of good milk at fourpence is more nutritious than four heads of celery at fourpence each.

"Finally, it is all in using your judgment, my dear."

And the grand-looking old lady smiled kindly as she swept away, leaving her companion a good deal the wiser for these valuable hints on domestic economy.

SAYING GRACE.

O God, from whom all blessings come,
Who dost our daily bread prepare,
We thank Thee for Thy mercies sure,
For all Thy love, and all Thy care.

And, as we gather round our board,
Ere of Thy bounty we partake,
We pray that Thou wilt bless our food,
And bless us too, for Jesus' sake.

HOW CHILDREN SHOULD BE FED.

BY GORDON STABLES, M.D., AUTHOR OF "THE WIFE'S GUIDE TO HEALTH AND HAPPINESS," ETC.

HE was sitting on a green bank by the roadside.

He was hurrying along towards the railway station.

She was a tramp.

He was a gentleman.

She was feeding a baby four months old on red herring.

He stopped to remonstrate with her.

"My good woman," he said, in a shocked tone of voice, "do you not know that you are feeding that child on food it cannot possibly digest?"

"Mind your own business," she cried. "*I* should know something about feeding babies by this time. I've buried five of them!"

"No wonder," said he, and walked sadly on to the station.

None of my readers, I am sure, would do anything so foolish as did that poor ignorant woman; and yet it is not, I believe, too much to say that a very large number of babies are every week sent to join the majority through errors in feeding.

In this brief paper I can only lay down general principles, but still I hope a few useful hints may be gathered therefrom.

Now, first as to very young infants. I cannot too forcibly remind the young mother that her milk, and that alone, is its proper food until the milk teeth begin to make their appearance, and that a deal of mischief is wrought by the habit of thickening baby's food too soon with flour.

"This child is hungry," I have heard mothers say, "and I'm convinced my milk is not strong enough for him."

Then they would proceed to administer pap of some sort. But even if the mother's milk be not nourishing enough, she can fall back upon cow's—the doctor will tell her how to use it. For, to give pap to a very young baby is to heat its blood, to sour its secretions, and, in a word, to retard its growth, and lay the foundation for future debility and a weakly constitution.

Infancy may be said to be over when the child begins to lose the milk teeth, and Nature will now demand food somewhat more substantial than slops or pap of any kind.

And it is just about this time that fond and too-indulgent mothers are apt to make a grievous mistake. They like to see Johnny or Maggie seated at the table—among other people—and feeding like grown folks. Parents will cut up meat for the child, or mince it—sometimes it may not be too tender, either—and heap his plate therewith, and rejoice to see him eat.

The mistake is a ruinous one to the child's health and constitution.

I am not saying that you may not give the child a very little *very* tender meat—mutton, beef, fowl, or not over-high game; but if you wish him or her to grow up hardy, happy, good-natured, and clear-brained, then the more pudding and milk food and the less meat the better. For this latter will heat the blood, spoil digestion, and irritate brain and nervous system. Instead, therefore, of a healthy child, you have a flabby, soft, peevish one, that will catch cold if not constantly wrapped up, and be a constant source of anxiety to the mother.

If you are inclined to doubt what I say, I should like to point to parishes in the Scottish Highlands, where, from year's end to year's end, the children seldom, if ever, see meat of any kind, but are fed almost wholly on milk, oatmeal, and vegetables, such as potatoes and greens, and with butter, sugar, and treacle for their puddings. Why, the children south of the Tweed are not in it with these hard-limbed, brown-skinned, happy children of the mist.

Her Majesty the Queen knows this, and the royal family were reared on oatmeal porridge.

But despite such examples, as I am writing principally for English children, I must pander in some measure to English taste. I will have one last word, however, and tell you plainly that it is not until an English boy leaves home for school, leaves maternal blandishments and stomachic indulgences, and gets fed with some approximation to hygienic rules, that he begins to throw off his flabbiness, and, aided by playground exercise, develops those firm muscles and tough nerves that make him as good a man physically as the world knows.

Regularity in diet is very essential. Children want feeding oftener than grown-up people, because they are making bone and muscle. This is one reason why they should have a separate table.

But the habit of eating all day long should certainly not be encouraged.

Change of diet is also most essential. Happily, in all large families there is little difficulty in managing this every day of the week, if it is thought desirable. We have good beef and mutton, we have fowl and rabbit and game, and a little soup may not come in amiss, especially if thickened with nice barley and a few vegetables. Then we have fish.

The stronger meats, such as pork, and I may add veal, with fat duck or goose, are not suitable for children's diet. The fish ought not to be of the oilier kinds, for town children at all events. Country "bairns," who dance and gambol all day long in the pure air, may eat salmon and plaice and herring, but your tiny cockneys, no.

Tinned fish and tinned meats of all kinds are, I think, best avoided.

Eggs—really new-laid, and like Cæsar's wife, above suspicion—are excellent adjuncts to a child's diet. They may be simply boiled, or poached, or "mushed," *à la Scotia*. To mush eggs thus, they are simply beaten up with a little salt, then placed on the fire in an enamelled saucepan with some milk, and stirred till thick.

Pudding must be a standing and daily diet with children, and, of course, milk should be almost a staple.

Oatmeal porridge, if well made, is a splendid breakfast dish. Choose *medium* oatmeal, not the rough Scotch. As soon as the water—to which a good spoonful of salt has been added—comes to the boil, begin to "meal-in" slowly, and "meal-in" till it is quite thick. Then boil three minutes, not a second longer. Pour into flat plates or soup-plates, and when cold enough eat with a cup of nice creamy milk. I may inform my dear English reader that this wholesome Scottish dish is eaten with a spoon, not a knife and fork, and that to add sugar to it makes it unfit food for any animal except the "gintleman" that pays Paddy's rent.

Here is a hint worth remembering. A child should not be allowed to eat to repletion before the pudding comes. Yet this is a mistake that is constantly made.

Suet pudding with treacle is very wholesome.

Sugar is essential, but sweets between meals are most injurious, both to the teeth and digestion.

Fruit is very beneficial when given in moderation. It must be remembered, however, that the fruit should be in season, just ripe enough, but not overmuch so. Gooseberries, strawberries, and raspberries are all good. Currants not so wholesome and safe. Apples and pears are good, but best stewed. Oranges should be ripe, and not sour. Pine-apples are best avoided. If good and ripe, they possess excellent qualities, but when do you find them in perfection and cheap enough for the ordinary-sized purse?

Nuts are very nutritious and wholesome. Cocoa-nut, however, is rather indigestible.

Vegetables should always form a portion of our children's diet. The king of all vegetables is, of course, the potato.

I believe they should always be mashed—that is, really mashed, not simply bruised and left full of lumps. There should not be a morsel the size of a pea left unmashed. They should then be placed over the fire and stirred with a little nice cream or good milk, and served *hot*.

I believe also that green vegetables should not be given to children unless well mashed.

Peas and beans are very nourishing. Somewhat less so is cauliflower, but well-mashed carrots, turnips, and parsnips are very wholesome and good.

Artichokes disarrange the digestion as often as not.

A child *must* be taught to eat slowly, or he cannot long remain in good health.

He ought to go to bed early, have a long night, and be at breakfast by eight o'clock sharp, having first had his bath and *well* washed his teeth. Good hygienic habits, believe me, mother, cannot be instilled too soon.

"MOTHER."

BY THE REV. ARCHIBALD G. BROWN.

FOR a few minutes let me speak on this word MOTHER, the very sweetest word in the whole of the English language. And, if there be no sweeter name, there is assuredly no more potent one. The mother makes the man, for, in nine cases out of ten, it is the mother's influence that moulds the child. A wise man was asked when the education of a child should commence. His answer was significant. Twenty years before its birth, in the education of its mother; and so is it, and it would be easy, I doubt not, to find a thousand illustrations of that truth. Solomon, the wisest of men, seems to hint at that when, in the Proverbs, you have over and over again this suggestive expression, "the law of his mother." Yes, there may be "the commandment of the father," but it is ever linked with "the law of the mother."

There is not one word, so far as I have been able to study the theme, that gathers up into itself such a wealth of meaning as this word "mother." I know that there are some sad exceptions; but my point is not what some mothers are, but what God's ideal of the mother is, and what, blessed be God, the vast majority find "mother" to be. It has seemed to me as if the whole field of the different virtues were reaped and gathered up into one sheaf in that word "mother." When you speak of "mother," you mean something infinitely more than the one who simply gave you birth. In giving birth she *becomes* a mother; but, oh, she never ceases *to be* the mother! You never hear anyone saying of a living mother, "She was my mother." It is always, "She is my mother," for, when she becomes the mother in fact, God by a marvellous arrangement of wisdom makes her become a mother in spirit for all time.

And what that word "mother" covers, who shall say? I believe—and I speak frankly—that it takes years to find out what "mother" means. You often hear the little ones who lost their mothers in their infancy greatly pitied, and I marvel not at it; but no child knows the worth of a mother as does a grown-up son or daughter. It is as the years roll by that one gradually discovers the manifold beauty that lies wrapped up in that matchless word. When God Himself would let men know what His tenderness is (I speak with reverence), it seems as if He Himself had to bring in the word "mother." He says in the 103rd Psalm, "Like as a father pitieth his children." Oh, yes, but I want something more than pity. I often want consolation; I want comforting; and God says, through His servant Isaiah, "As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you." All the way down the ages you have illustrations of this. The mother stands in a position altogether unique. When there is a need for gentleness, compassion, solace, comfort, who can take the mother's place?

I have often smiled inwardly at the shrewd common sense of that man of old whose record is found in the Second Book of Kings. You remember that he goes out nto the harvest-field and there is his little boy toddling after him, and the hot Eastern sun strikes down upon the child. As long as the boy was all right the father could ook after him splendidly. Yes, we fathers can all do that. But the moment that the little one began to cry, and say, 'My head, my head," what is the father's recipe? He said, "*Carry him to his mother.*" Ah, and I trow that there are hundreds who are ready to say, "Carry me to my mother," when sorrow is in the heart, or pain is in the head, and when trouble is round about.

I can take even a higher illustration. Our Lord and Master meets that funeral procession as it comes out of Nain. With one word of deity He says, "Arise;" and the young man lives. What will Jesus do with a young man who lives by His word? He did not know anything better to do with the young man than to give him to his mother. "And He delivered him unto his mother."

"Mother." It is the first word we learn to lisp, and all through life its gentle influence remains a source of strength. Oh! it is the sweetest word in the English tongue. God's most beautiful creation lies within that cradle of language.

TO AMUSE A SICK CHILD.—It is an excellent plan to keep a few toys for emergencies. When a child is ailing, or just recovering from an illness, it is apt to be peevish and fretful, and its usual playthings do not amuse. It is then that the emergency toys work like a charm. Let them be especially nice, and adapted to the case—that is, have such toys as an invalid can enjoy. Let them be kept for that purpose alone, so that the novelty may not wear off. Add to them occasionally, so as to keep up the interest. This plan works equally well with the older children, and it is a good idea to have a box of pictures, scraps, etc., kept to be used when one member of the family is confined to the room. Prepare a box for emergencies, and you will not regret it when there is a fretful child to amuse.

A NEW MOTHER.

BY A. STUART FLETCHER, AUTHOR OF "RACHEL HARVEY'S DELIVERANCE," ETC.

IT was April—lovely, sunny, showery April. Elmhurst Common was golden and white with gorse and blackthorn blossom, and in the woods behind, pale, starry primroses were lifting their delicate heads from among the moss and dead leaves.

But the little group of matrons assembled in the village shop were not discussing the beauty of the weather, except on one point, that it was "just right for a wedding." And as the wedding was the Squire's, much was expected, even in the matter of weather.

Elmhurst had long been exercised about the solitary state of its chief inhabitant. "There ought to be a lady at the Hall," said the popular voice, and there was consequently much satisfaction when it became known that the lady was about to appear. It was satisfactory, too, that she was in some sort a connection of the place, being the Vicar's niece, for Elmhurst did not believe much in strangers. Miss Kate Seymour was an orphan, who had never lived at Elmhurst. Mr. Fraser had met her in London, but she was to come and be married from the Vicarage, and the wedding was to be the next day.

"I mind me of the Squire's first wife," said Mrs. Brown. "A pretty young thing she was, and died when Miss Stella was two days old. But the Squire's only a young man yet, though Miss Stella's getting a big girl, and I'm real glad he's going to marry again—ain't you, Mrs. Bates?"

Mrs. Bates, who was weighing out Mrs. Brown's ounce of tea, shook her head with an air of wisdom, and sighed. "It's a good thing for the Squire, no doubt," she said, solemnly; "but whether it's a good thing for the poor child, mum, we shall see."

"Stepmothers ain't like own mothers, everyone knows," said another customer.

"That's true," and all the women shook their heads, and sighed, "Poor little thing."

"There comes the poor dear now," said Mrs. Brown; and they all craned their necks to see the child who had so lately acquired a new interest in their minds.

Stella was walking by her nurse's side, holding carefully a basketful of primroses, which she had been gathering. She was a delicate-looking child—not pretty, people said, but "odd in her ways, and unlike other children." She was conscious of this too, poor child, in a dim way, but felt it was explained by one great fact—she had no mother. All the other children she knew—those in the village, those she saw in church—had mothers, who petted, caressed, and took care of them. She had no one, for papa was generally away, or, when he was home, merely saw her at dessert, when he fed her with nuts and oranges, and delivered her to Nurse Martin with a sigh of relief when that good woman appeared. But he always asked two things—if Miss Stella were well, and if she were good; and when Nurse curtsied, "Yes, if you please, sir," said a relieved "Good-night." As for Nurse, she was plump and indolent, allowed the child to do anything she pleased to save trouble, and for the rest saw that she was well clothed and fed.

No one knew how much pent-up affection there was in the odd, shy little girl, nor how great was her sense of want and motherlessness.

Two consolations Stella had—her flowers, which she loved with almost a passion, and her "Good Shepherd." Other people knew about the flowers, but the sensitive child told no one about the other love.

A visitor had once given her a picture of the "Good Shepherd," and told her its story. It now hung at the foot of her bed, and the loving, tender face seemed to smile down upon her. The protecting arms were round a feeble little lamb. She, Stella, was Christ's little lamb too, the lady had told her; and the child believed. She listened in church for the sound of His name, and read her little Bible for stories about Him. Much she could not understand, and Nurse always said, "Children should not bother," when she asked questions; but a great deal was very simple, and she read and learned until the thought of the Loving One grew into the child's heart.

"Nurse, why were they decorating the church? Easter's over, and it's a long time yet to Whitsuntide," said Stella, when they reached home after their walk.

"Well, dear," said Nurse, settling comfortably into the rocking-chair, "there's to be great doings to-morrow. Your pa didn't want you told before, but he's going to be married. You're going to have a new mamma!"

If Nurse expected a sensation, she was disappointed, for Stella said never a word. She crept away to her own room. Could this great, good thing be true? A new mamma for her? She had told the good Shepherd, often, how lonely she was; He had heard her, and this was His answer. She knelt down by her bedside, and folding her little hands, said, "Thank you, dear Jesus, for sending me a new mother."

* * * * * * *

It was afternoon, and the church decorators (the Vicar's daughters) had nearly finished their work, though not quite to their own satisfaction.

"We couldn't make it white enough," said Laura Seymour to her cousin, the bride-elect, who had come in to see their work.

"There isn't a single white flower left," added Effie, from the depths of a big basket.

"I'm sure it looks lovely," said Kate, uncritically.

"And it's going to be a perfect day to-morrow. Why do you sigh, Kate?"

"Oh, the old story. I'm thinking of the child. Odd, queer, naughty, unlovable, everybody says she is. And I never could get on with tiresome children! It seems too bad to have the peace of one's married life worried away by a troublesome child."

"Of course, you'll send her to school. That's all settled," said Laura.

"I'm always sorry for poor little Stella," said kind-hearted Effie; "but I can never get her to talk or anything."

"Well, Mr. Fraser thinks school would be the best place for her, too, so why discuss it? Come, Effie, let us finish. Oh for a few more white flowers!"

At that moment the church door opened slowly, and a child entered, the identical troublesome child just discussed. In her hand she held a basket containing some beautiful hot-house flowers.

The girls exclaimed with delight, "How lovely! See, azaleas, Eucharist lilies, lilies of the valley—everything that is beautiful. But what are they for, Stella?"

The child looked up shyly at Laura. "They are for my new mamma."

The girls started; Kate frowned to them to be silent.

"Who is your new mamma, little girl?" she asked.

"I don't know. She's coming to-morrow. I think Jesus has sent her."

"But you loved your flowers so," said Laura. "Everyone knows how you prized them. The gardener always said you loved them more than anything else in the world."

"'But you loved your flowers so,' said Laura."

"But I'd give them to my new mamma; of course, I'd give her anything."

"Go on with your decorations, girls," said Kate, drawing a warm hand from her muff and putting it round the lightly-clad little body.

"Come and sit here, Stella. Now tell me more about your new mamma."

The child nestled back on the warm arm; her shyness seemed to vanish.

"I'll say my prayers at her knee at night, and she'll kiss me, and tuck me up in bed. That's what mothers do. And when I'm naughty she'll be sorry, and help me to be good. And I'll try; and I'll love her—all my life long."

The warm arm trembled a little, and the strange lady bent down and kissed the flushed little face.

"Go home now, Stella, and when you say your prayers to-night pray for your new mamma."

Next day the village bells rang merrily for Squire Fraser's wedding, and the church was full. Not a Bates, Brown, or other villager was missing. But Stella was not among them; her little face looked wistfully from the nursery windows. Was this the happy day she had dreamed of all night? Nurse had been telling her this morning that the new mamma was not coming home for a month or more, and when she came she would only be a stepmother, which meant something quite different from a mother.

What did it all mean? The tears gathered slowly in Stella's eyes, and she turned away to her own room. There hung her picture, the tender face still smiling down upon

the little lamb. Surely the Good Shepherd had heard her when she prayed to Him last night. He did love her, she was sure; and even if it should be as Nurse said about the new mother, surely in those kind arms she should find comfort and love. Lying upon her bed, she began again to say her simple prayer, "Jesus, tender Shepherd, hear me," and, tired out with emotion, fell asleep.

"Wake up, Miss Stella! wake up! Here's your new mamma come to see you."

Stella felt herself rather roughly shaken by Nurse, and opened her eyes on a wonderful vision. There, in glistening white satin and lace, stood the pretty stranger lady who had kissed her yesterday. She shrank timidly away. But Kate understood the shy child. Stooping down, she held out her arms,—

"Come, Stella darling, and kiss your new mamma. I could not go away without seeing my little girl."

"My little girl"! Stella never forgot those words her whole life long.

If Kate gave up something of ease and comfort, it was repaid her a hundredfold in the love of her faithful little daughter. And as for Stella, she blossomed like a flower in summer sunshine, under the loving care and wise training of her new mother.

THE WORD SHE REMEMBERED.

BY M. E. SANGSTER.

"YOU remember the sermon you heard, my dear?"
The little one blushed, and dropped her eyes,
Then lifted them bravely, with look of cheer—
Eyes that were blue as the summer skies.

"I'm afraid I forgot what the minister said,
He said so much to the grown-up men,
And the pulpit was right up over my head;
But I told mamma that he said 'Amen.'

"And 'Amen,' you know, means 'Let it be,'
Whatever our Lord may please to do;
And that is sermon enough for me,
If I mind and feel so, the whole week through."

I took the little one's word to heart;
I wish I could carry it all day long—
The "Amen" spirit which hides the art
To meet each cross with a happy song.

THE ART OF RESTING.

BY PHYLLIS BROWNE.

AN American writer once said that "American women never think they have a right to rest until they are too tired to enjoy it." The remark is true of other than American women. A great many English mothers share the opinion. They seem as though they must not rest, but go on working and striving from morning till night, until they break down from sheer weariness; then "nervous exhaustion" makes itself felt, and with the best will in the world they *cannot* be quiet. They become old and wrinkled, are irritable in temper, or ailing in body, before the time, and either retire from the scene altogether, or remain to be a burden to their friends and a pain to themselves.

How much we wish we could persuade these mothers to pause while there is yet time, and alter their mode of life! We who watch them are convinced that they are making a mistake. It is right enough that they should do their best for those whom they love best, and so long as they work within reason we honour them for their industry and energy; we only do not want them to pay too high a price in order that the home may be well served, and that a high standard of comfort may be maintained. Still more would we urge them to rest if the object of their striving is that appearances should be kept up, or luxuries and finery should be provided. Experts in economy always tell us that it is a great point in economy to measure the worth of what we receive with what we pay for receiving, in order that we may find out whether we get the equivalent for our outlay. Now, there is no doubt that certain good things desirable for household use, and intended for general enjoyment, though of excellent value, are yet bought too dear when the coins which have to be paid for them are the health, energy, cheeriness, and happiness of the mother of the family.

Mothers who overburden themselves in order to keep the household wheels running smoothly would, perhaps, relax now and again and take necessary rest if they realised what a thankless task they have undertaken. We injure those whom we love more when we accustom them to accept sacrifices from others than we benefit them by the result of the sacrifice, simply because we help to make them selfish. Mothers who wait on the members of their families, and anticipate their every want, are not really doing them a kindness; it would be far kinder to teach them to help themselves.

The hard part of the business is that self-sacrifice of this kind does not win the love and esteem of those on whom it is bestowed. Husbands rarely love and admire their wives the more because they are anxious and overworked. Very often they take it for granted that this state of things is inevitable, and they are sorry for it, but they soon get used to it. Pride and affection are aroused when mothers are bright, sympathetic, and equal to what is going on. Children, too, soon learn to take it as a matter of course that mother should be preoccupied and have no leisure. As they grow up they carry the story of their affairs to some one less busy than mother is. If the mother were less absorbed in household affairs the probability is that the household would go on just as comfortably, and the mother herself would gain incalculable benefit.

There is a saying that "*Knowing how* is one of the best of labour-saving appliances," and the more capable a woman is, the more anxious is she to improve her knowledge. Once of a day women were most unwilling to

receive suggestions about management; they thought their own way was the best, and they would not take a hint from anyone. Now all this is changed; they are glad of anything that is new, and think that a "recipe," especially one that appears in print, is a treasure worthy to be worked out. How would they like a recipe on the Art of Resting?

Undoubtedly many mothers are quite willing to rest, but they do not know how to set about it. If we were to talk to them on the subject, they would probably reply, "All that you say is very true, and we know that we are working ourselves into our graves; no one can keep on for years, as we are doing, without paying the penalty. But how can we help it? When the work is there, we must do it; and if we left it and let things go, we should be miserable to sit with our hands before us." Mothers who talk thus certainly want a recipe on the Art of Resting. What they need is a new and better arrangement. Let them look around and discover whether there are not some things that might be left, and others that might be less thoroughly done, and yet a fair measure of comfort be secured. If any member of the family were to fall ill, some part of the household work would be undone, and yet things would go on without great disturbance. Why not make the change before the illness rather than after it, and so perhaps prevent the illness?

Industrious people do not necessarily rest when they sit with their hands before them. Idle hands are certainly most unedifying subjects of contemplation, especially when they are our own. But change of occupation, and more important still, change of thought, very often yield most refreshing rest. Change of situation also, and change of apparel, are most restful to the weary body; and changes like these are easily obtained. A wise mother, now taking her long rest, once said that whenever she felt tired out she made herself go upstairs, put on a smarter dress, do her hair, then go into another room, and she felt ever so much better for it. To sit on the same chair, at the same corner of the same table, in view of the same window-pane, and doing a pile of mending that always seems the same, becomes after a time very wearisome. Let mothers remember that when they get a change they get a rest.

Mothers who are in the way of getting over-tired ought to make a practice of lying down for a few minutes on the bed or sofa in the middle of the day, and getting a little nap. They would be wonderfully refreshed thereby. There would be no occasion to take a long sleep; if they but "lose themselves" it will be enough. Not long ago a mother was heard to say that if you were to prop her against a lamp-post at any given minute she would fall asleep, for she never knew what it was not to feel tired. Mothers who have young children frequently have broken nights. These mothers ought to count it amongst their duties that they should get a little nap each day.

Mothers ought to make a practice of reading part of a good book, or an inspiring poem, or a pleasant story every day, and they ought to interest themselves in the news of the day. The change of thought thus gained will be most restful. They ought also to devote a part of each evening to social enjoyment, to seeing their friends, having a little music, and making merry. A good laugh is a most restful experience. It may be that time spent thus will be taken away from patching and darning. All the better. Loving husbands and children will rejoice to know that instead of garments being mended, mother's youth is being renewed.

The best and truest Friend that toiling and over-burdened men and women ever had once paid a visit to two women, Martha and Mary. Both were His friends, we are told that He loved them both; but Mary He praised, and the occasion of His thus distinguishing her was that she put her work on one side, sat down, and listened whilst some good talk was going on, thus making the most of an opportunity of lifting her life above the "trouble about many things" that made her sister irritable and careworn. Surely this incident should teach over-worked women a lesson. If they feel that through much serving they are losing their hold of the good part, let them at once put the household care and anxiety aside, and like Mary sit still and enter into communion with the best and the highest.

Hints for Busy Housewives.

COLD AND DAMP FEET.—Never sit in damp shoes. It is often supposed that unless shoes are positively wet it is unnecessary to change them while the feet are at rest. This is a great fallacy, for when the least dampness is absorbed into the sole, in its evaporation it absorbs the heat from the foot, and thus perspiration is dangerously checked. This can be easily proved by trying the experiment of neglecting the rule. The feet will be found cold and damp after a few minutes, although on taking off the shoe and examining it, it will appear to be quite dry.

Oak Wood Stain.—To give a good oak colour to a pine floor, wash in a solution of one pound of copperas dissolved in one gallon of strong lye.

Table Linen should always be hemmed by hand, and when trimming the edges ravellings should be kept for darning purposes.

Wakefulness.—A lady correspondent says: "If one awakes in the night and feels hopelessly wide awake, a good remedy is a glass of hot water. It should be sipped while almost at boiling heat, and one who tries it will find herself going to sleep like an infant, and getting, too, the most restful and peaceful sleep imaginable."

Toilet Soap.—Beware of highly scented soap. If a cake is over-scented, you may be almost sure that it is composed of bad materials.

To Relieve Fatigue.—Hot water applied to the back of the neck will relieve nervous fatigue.

Good Digestion.—Don't worry; it interferes with the healthful action of the stomach.

A Simple Disinfectant.—Ground coffee sprinkled on a shovel of hot cinders is a good disinfectant.

A Delicious Pudding.—One quart of milk, four tablespoonfuls of corn flour thoroughly dissolved in milk. Boil until well cooked. Add yolks of four eggs, and four tablespoonfuls of sugar well beaten together; one teaspoonful of vanilla. Put in pudding dish and bake for twenty minutes. Spread jelly or preserves on top. Cover with whites of the four eggs beaten stiff, with four tablespoonfuls of powdered sugar. Serve cold with cream on it.

Scorched Linen.—When linens or muslins are scorched in the getting up, without being actually burnt, a brown mark is left upon the spot, which may be removed by laying some of the following composition upon it, before the article is again washed: Slice six large onions, and express the juice, which must be added to a quart of vinegar, with one ounce of pearl-ash. Boil the whole until the mixture becomes thick, and apply it to the scorched spot while it is hot.

Tubs will not warp or crack open if the precaution is taken to put a pail of water into each directly after use.

Colds.—There is danger in neglecting a cold. Many who have died of consumption dated their troubles from exposure, followed by a cold which settled on their lungs, and in a short time they were beyond the skill of the best physicians.

AT present we can hear of no change in the shape of dress skirts. Those still in favour are either of the gored shape, when the front seams are trimmed with a narrow passementerie or braid; or the bell-shaped skirt, when the trimming is used round the skirt. These trimmings are set on in a variety of ways, anything that suits the taste of the wearer being admissible. However, the tendency to have flounces, etc., only a few inches from the waist is one that must be avoided by stout persons. It is quite the exception to see a dress skirt without any trimming at all.

Fig. 13.

Two shades of material are being used on the same costume; for instance, the skirt of the dress is made to open in front over a robing of the lighter shade, and the bodice also opens in the same way over a waistcoat of the light material. Black and plain coloured dresses can be very effectively trimmed with white. Thus we see a black velveteen dress with rows of white military braid embroidered with jet. Black dresses are also being ornamented with coloured trimmings; carmine, green, or yellow being the favourite hues for this purpose.

Fig. 13. Here we show a lady's dress, the pattern of which is in one of the newest styles, and yet it is exceedingly easy to make. As will be seen from our illustration, the body is quite plain. The short double pelerine cape is hooked to the bodice, so that it can be unattached when worn under a jacket, which is a great convenience. As the warmer days of Spring approach, this dress can be worn out-of-doors without a jacket or mantle, when the shoulder capes and basque will give a nice finish. The jacket bodice finishes in a slight point both back and front, and the basque is cut separately and set on to the same, having two small pleats at the back to make it give to the figure. Each piece is lined with sateen, and bound with braid. The sleeve is in cornet shape, and made in one piece; the lower part being trimmed with braid. The bell skirt is also trimmed with braid, and has a stiff lining when a soft material is used, otherwise the ordinary alpaca or sateen lining will answer. This dress will take from seven to eight yards of material, a light homespun or tweed being suitable.

Fig. 14.

Fig. 14. This illustrates a young lady's dress bodice, which can be worn with a skirt of the same material, or used as a blouse bodice with another skirt. The blouse is made over a fitting lining, and has a sort of waistcoat front of velveteen fastened down the front. The material is gathered on the shoulders and brought down on either side of the velvet front in tiny pleats. Pointed tabs edge the bodice all round the waist, and are bound with velvet. A basque could take the place of these tabs, and would be more suitable in some cases. The full sleeve has two epaulettes trimmed with velvet, and also a band of velvet at the edge of the cuff. The high collar is of velvet.

Fig. 15.

Fig. 15. Our little sons from four to six years of age will be wanting to leave off their heavy winter overcoats this month. The heavy one must be replaced by a thinner one, for it will not be warm enough to go without altogether. This need will be met by the pattern we illustrate under this number. Get one and a quarter to one and a half yards of double-width tweed, and cut out the little loose paletot, then fit it on, and make any alterations necessary. The little coat need not be lined throughout unless desired; but a facing of Italian cloth will be necessary, and the edges stitched out in three rows with black silk. The little cape is a stylish finish for a coat of this size. The inside seams can be made tidy with a binding of galloon.

Fig. 16.

Fig. 16. Here we have a pretty little dress for a girl between the ages of six and ten. It is made on to a fitting yoke, blouse fashion, and the skirt part is lined throughout, set out to the yoke with gathers, and is also drawn in at the waist, back and front, with three runners, which must be secured at the back to an extra piece of lining. A rosette of narrow ribbon velvet is set on where these gathers finish. A flounce is used round the yoke, and also at the bottom of the skirt. The sleeve has a large puff at the top set on to a tight-fitting cuff.

Flat patterns can be supplied. Figs. 13, 14, 15, and 16, 6½d. each, post free. Address, "M. C. Pattern," 9, Paternoster Row, London, E.C.